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REMARKS

In the Office Action, the examiner objected to the disclosure on the ground that the "turning flow a" in the specification at page 8, lines 27-28 is not labeled in Figure 6. The "turning flow a" is shown in Figure 3 rather than Figure 6. Thus, as noted above, the applicant has amended the specification to include "Figure 3" at page 8, lines 27-28.

The examiner rejected Claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. It is stated that the phrase "the plural activation material units" in Claim 1 and the phrase "the plurality of holders" in Claim 5 lack clear antecedent basis. It is also stated that the recitation "small lump" in Claim 1 is vague and indefinite. Accordingly, the applicant has amended the set of claims to more clearly define the features of the present invention.

The examiner stated that Claim 1 is incomplete because it is essential to the present invention to include activation material held in a holder including a retainer to create turbulent flows of water. Accordingly, the applicant has amended Claim 1 to include the essential elements of the invention.

In the Office Action, the examiner rejected Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kakamu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,103,111). Accordingly, the applicant has amended Claim 1 to

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more clearly differentiate the present invention from the technology disclosed by the cited Kakamu et al. reference.

As recited in Claim 1, one of the essential features of the present invention resides in the fact that (1) each of the activation material units has a cylindrical shape, (2) two or more activation material units are placed in the retainer of each of the holders without contacting with one another, and (3) the flow openings on each retainer have slope surfaces where directions of the slope surfaces are different from one another for producing the turbulent flows of the water. The cited Kakamu et al. reference does not show or suggest these essential features of the present invention as discussed below.

The cited Kakamu et al. reference discloses tourmaline composite grains and an apparatus using the tourmaline composite grains to supply wash water. The water supply apparatus for supplying the wash water comprises a tank for storing raw water, a water supplier which supplies the raw water stored in said tank, and a tower containing the above-mentioned tourmaline composite grains. The tower receives the raw water supplied from the tank by the water supplier, and makes the raw water flowing therethrough to contact with the tourmaline composite grains. Thus, the raw water is converted to activated water by contacting with the tourmaline composite grains, and the activated water can be supplied. (column 2, lines 27-37)

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With respect to the feature (1) of the present invention noted above, each of the activation material units has a cylindrical shape. In the cited Kakamu et al. reference, the tourmaline composite grains 115 are in a grain or powder form (column 11, lines 22-24). In other words, the tourmaline composite grains 115 do not have any controlled shape but rather simply a grain or powder form. Thus, the essential feature (1) of the present invention is not shown or suggested by the cited Kakamu et al. reference.

With respect to the feature (2) of the present invention, two or more activation material units are placed in the retainer of each of the holders without contacting with one another. In the cited Kakamu et al. reference, many tourmaline composite grains 115 are contained in the inner tube 114. Apparently, the tourmaline composite grains 115 are contacting with each other in the inner tube 114 because the tourmaline composite grains 115 are basically in the powder form. Therefore, the essential feature (2) of the present invention is not shown or suggested by the cited Kakamu et al. reference.

With respect to the feature (3) of the present invention, the flow openings on each retainer have slope surfaces where directions of the slope surfaces are different from one another for producing the turbulent flows of the water. In the cited Kakamu et al. reference, the openings 107 at the bottom of the inner tube 114 do not have any slope surfaces as shown in Figs. 15 and 16 let alone

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difference of directions of the slope surfaces. Thus, the turbulent flows of the water will not be created by the openings 107 of the cited Kakamu et al. reference. Therefore, the essential feature (3) of the present invention is not shown or suggested by the cited Kakamu et al. reference.

Since none of the essential features of the present invention are shown or suggested by the cited Kakamu et al. reference, the applicant believes that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) is no longer applicable to the present invention.

In this opportunity, the applicant has amended the specification to correct minor wording errors therein. The abstract of the disclosure has been amended to reduce the number of words and to be consistent with the amended claims. This is to verify that no new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

Under the circumstances, the applicant believes that the present application is in the condition for allowance, and the applicant respectfully requests that the present application be allowed and passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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